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A new downy pteryla in passerine birds

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Recent treatments of the natal pterylosis of passerine birds in the Neotropics (Collins 1963, 1973, Collins & Kemp 1976, Ingels 1979), in Africa (Markus 1970, 1972) and in Asia (Ilyashenko 1981) have all followed Wetherbee (1957) in the terminology and in nearly all cases in the basic pattern of tracts he outlined. An additional tract in the cervical region has been reported by Collins & Bender (1977). I report here a new downy pteryla found in some Palaearctic passerine birds during field studies and when examining material in the collection of the Zoology Institute, USSR Academy of Science (Leningrad).

The new downy pteryla is situated at the base of the upper side of the wing between the innermost neossoptiles of the alar tract and the lateral margin of the humeral tract. These downs are attached to teleoptile feathers of the posthumeral tract (Lucas & Stettenheim 1972) (=pteryla caudohumeralis—Lucas 1979) and are here considered as posthumeral neossoptiles. These neossoptiles are usually represented by a partially oblique row of 3, rarely 2, reduced down about 1–2 mm long. They are not found in all individuals of a species nor even in all nestlings in the same nest. To date, posthumeral neossoptiles have been recorded in the following species: Raven *Corvus corax*

(6 of 6 individuals examined); Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* (8 of 20); Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* (8 of 10); Ashy Minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus* (4 of 6); Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* (6 of 39); Forest Wagtail *Dedronanthus indicus* (1 of 1); Godlewski Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* (4 of 20).

Although the current evidence indicates that the pattern and length of neossoptiles is fully developed at hatching (Wetherbee 1957: 356), in some individuals of the Carrion Crow and Chough posthumeral neossoptiles only appeared 2 or 3 days after hatching. In some nestlings of the Citrine Wagtail these delicate downs were lost in the hatching process and their apparent absence in other individuals may similarly be due to early loss. Further attention should be given to the neossoptiles of the alar region and the possible occurrence of posthumeral neossoptiles in other passerine species.

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Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar* breeding in Egypt

by Peter L. Meininger and Uffe Gjol Sorensen

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From 4 to 12 May 1983 Dr. Gamil Abdel Mowla Atta (Egyptian Wildlife Service) and the authors visited the lakes in the Egyptian Nile Delta (see Meininger & Mullié (1981) for a description) to study the local breeding birds. On the evening of 9 May 1983, from a dyke beside lake Burullus, 3 km south of Baltim (31°31'N, 31°07'E), we saw, heard and photographed from close range (down to 4 m) some unfamiliar sparrow-like birds. Based on field-notes recorded at that time we were later able to identify the birds as